

## Using LinkedIn to generate business

While Social Media is a hot topic of conversation this year, most of the tools focus on consumer centric business, and improving communication. If you provide B2B consulting, services or products, your options for social media are fairly limited, let's be honest you probably won't find many fans for your Facebook Legal Incorporation Services page. For these types of businesses, [LinkedIn](#) is a much better alternative. Here is a collection of tips I recommend using.

### Update your profile

If you or anyone on your key executives, creative talent, or sales staff doesn't already have a LinkedIn profile they should create one. Chances are though that most people already have an account, and unless they recently changed jobs, their profile hasn't been touched in a while and could use some updating. Here's an example of a before and after [LinkedIn profile from Guy Kawasaki](#) that has some excellent examples, but if you're short on time here are the highlights:

- *Add your voice.* Everyone has a personal style, way they talk or do things, and your profile should reflect your voice, quirks, and personal style, its what makes you memorable. Want your profile come up more often and for the right searches? Here are some [tips from LinkedIn on adding the right keywords to your profile](#).
- *Go for the Readers Digest level of detail.* Give details about what you did at your previous jobs, and what schools you went to. Give some details, but not too much. Try to be like a mini skirt, long enough to cover the essentials, but short enough to keep it interesting. Here are [tips from LinkedIn on building a stronger profile](#).
- *Get connected.* LinkedIn has put out a lot of stats that the more connections you have the more business you are likely to get. I suggest connecting only with people you know.
- *Get recommendations.* Again, LinkedIn has a lot of stats showing recommendations help you get business. Ask previous and current clients you have done business with, or people you know for recommendations, and give them back. Be honest and don't make everyone sound like Superman, if you don't have something nice to say, it's probably best not to say anything at all. Try to keep getting referrals, someone with 6 referrals spread out over 3 years probably looks better, than someone with 20 referrals all more than 2 years old. Here are some [tips on getting and giving LinkedIn recommendations](#).
- *Vanity URL.* LinkedIn started offering vanity URLs years ago, if you don't have one get one, it looks much more professional than a random string of numbers, here's mine: [Michael Gray's LinkedIn Profile](#).
- *Link to Your Website.* You can add up to three links, and if you choose "other" you can customize the anchor text, use it but don't abuse it.

### Create a company profile

LinkedIn now has the ability to create a company profile for your company, it will list everyone who works there and some information about the company. If you don't have one you can create it, but only if one of the email addresses connected to your profile is from the same domain as the company website. You don't need to do this but it makes your company look more complete, and provides a tool for reputation management should you ever need it. Here are some [tips on building an effective company profile on LinkedIn](#).

## Groups

Groups are a double-edged sword, joining more groups can make you look more important, but at a certain point it becomes unmanageable. I suggest starting small and building up, and trimming down, based on the conversations and your ability to participate. Here's are some [tips from LinkedIn on getting more out of groups](#).

## Getting involved

It should go without saying, but to get any value out of social media you have to be social, and participate, that's why limiting your contacts and groups is an important part of the process. [Search Engine Land has a group on LinkedIn](#) and you can see there are quite a few active discussions. My suggestion is read the group guidelines and watch before getting involved. Don't try to be a know it all and answer every question, but answer the ones that match your area of expertise. Also if a discussion is a few days old with no comments, earn some good karma by answering if you can. It would be nice if LinkedIn showed your activity in groups on your profile page but, currently it only shows on the homepage when you log in.

## Questions and answers

Another way to get involved is to ask/answer questions, working on a research project ask your peers for an opinion or [run a poll](#). If you want people to answer your questions or polls, make sure you answer there's from time to time. As a general rule I would answer 2-4 times as many questions as you ask.

## Update your status

You can send status updates on LinkedIn the same way you send status updates on Facebook and Twitter. If you're interested in efficiency, you can save time using services like Ping.fm (<http://www.ping.fm>) to update all of your services at once. That's generally not a strategy I'd recommend, your Facebook friends might want to know your kids won the baseball championship, your LinkedIn network probably doesn't care, so choose your updates strategically.

Did you publish a white paper, interesting article, bit of research, or complete a project, that's something that's much more appropriate, for a status update, and don't forget to put a link where appropriate.

## Finding the time

While the owners of LinkedIn would love it if you logged in every day, that's probably not the best use of your time. Logging in once or twice a week is enough for most people. Answer some questions, participate in one or two groups, and post a status update, you should be able to do this in less than an hour a week.

### **Power user tip**

You can be strategic about your participation, use the built-in search functions in the groups and answers sections to create searches to find questions targeted to your expertise or the service your company provides.

### **The payoff and getting business**

When you create a LinkedIn profile and join groups, you set up contact preferences, every action you do can be included in these update emails other people in your network get. You won't get included in every email, but you will get included in some, and the more you participate the more you'll be included. Every time someone sees your name and your activity on the network it reminds them you are there, and what you're doing. The more they remember you the more likely they are to refer business to you when someone asks them a question about something they've seen you participate in.

Use the power search tips to target phrases of people who are asking questions that someone in the sales funnel would ask. Use your network, to help you gain new leads, ask everyone to describe their ideal customer to you, if you know someone who fits the bill make a connection, people are much more likely to give referrals to people who give them referrals.

To wrap up, make sure your profile and the profiles of your other key team members, company is up to date, and sends a professional memorable message. Update your network of connections and make sure people are aware of you, ask about the types of business they are looking for, and pass on referrals. Join and participate in some groups, look for and answer questions. Use power search tips to get notified of questions and discussions that match your expertise. Using these tips you'll gain exposure, and get referrals from your network, and help out qualified potential new customers.

Ref: <http://searchengineland.com/how-to-use-linkedin-to-generate-business-44330>